

“I promised myself when I was elected to Congress that passing legislation to cover small business would be one of my top priorities,” said Congresswoman Kaptur, who is serving her fourteenth term. “Finally, it became possible to vote on a bill that will do this for millions of our fellow citizens. This legislation finally provides small businesses the ability to secure affordable health care coverage for their employees and their families.”

Congresswoman Kaptur said the Affordable Health Care for America Act will strengthen America and offer greater security to our workers, families, seniors and businesses. “It will enhance our nation’s health care system, placing American healthcare consumers where they belong: at the heart of it,” Kaptur said.

“With the mounting economic strain on American families and the rising costs of health insurance to workers, businesses and federal budget, the status quo has proven itself unsustainable, fiscally irresponsible and morally unacceptable. “The time has come for this historical change. I stand in support of its promise to the American people.”

Kaptur said the legislation would strengthen the Medicare system. She said an estimated 7,600 seniors in the Ninth Congressional District would benefit from closing the prescription drug “donut hole,” starting with \$500 of cost forgiveness in 2010.

Earlier in the evening, Kaptur co-sponsored and helped win passage (240-194) of an important amendment that prohibits the use of federal funds for abortions, except in the case of rape, incest and the life of the mother, as has been the law of the land under the Hyde Amendment for 32 years.

Kaptur said the Stupak Amendment “maintained existing federal law, the Hyde Amendment, on the compelling issue of abortion. This amendment reaffirms longstanding, existing law, and nothing more. It represents the broad consensus of the American people after 32 years of consideration on this issue.”

Kaptur cited several economic reasons for support of the legislation:

- The rising cost of health insurance from 7% of median family income in 1987 to 17% now
- The correlation between health care costs and bankruptcy
- Substantial savings (estimated at \$120 million) for hospitals and health care providers in the Ninth Congressional District as a result of reductions in uncompensated care
- Strengthening not-for-profit purchasing collaboratives, such as the FrontPath Health Coalition in northwest Ohio, to achieve careful plan management and cost savings
- A temporary reinsurance program, capitalized at \$10 billion, to help offset the costs of expensive health claims for employers that provide health benefits for retirees age 55-64

Congresswoman Kaptur noted that 60 percent of America’s uninsured population consists of small business owners, workers and their families. “This equals at least 28 million uninsured Americans,” Kaptur said.

Premium increases (approximately 130% since 2000) on small business, Kaptur said, “have smothered their potential and destroyed their ability to cover their employees.” Under the House bill, Kaptur said, an estimated 14,500 small businesses will be able to obtain affordable health care coverage, with 12,400 of those businesses eligible for tax credits to help reduce the cost of coverage.

Without this bill, family premiums are projected to increase an average of \$1,800 per year. With this bill, no American family will have to declare bankruptcy just because a family member got sick.